

NEA Policy Statements (Source: www.nea.org)

3. Accreditation in Higher Education

The accreditation process must be used to strengthen the integrity of American higher education. Therefore:

1. NEA supports regional, state, national, and discipline accrediting bodies that recognize and promote substantial participation of faculty in the entire accrediting process.
2. NEA believes that, to protect institutional diversity and autonomy, accrediting agencies should not become a means for imposing standardized curricula, assessment models, or pedagogical methods on higher education institutions.
3. NEA believes that accreditation should be a process whereby programs, facilities, faculty, and administrators are reviewed for the purpose of supporting the learning opportunities for students.

Furthermore, NEA proposes that the accrediting process give special attention to the following issues:

- * student access with financial aid tied to tuition increases
- * remedial and retention programs
- * student living conditions
- * class size
- * faculty-student ratio
- * student advisory systems
- * overreliance on nontenure-track or part-time faculty
- * status of affirmative action in hiring of faculty and staff
- * racial dynamics on campus
- * faculty compensation and benefits, including pay equity
- * faculty development programs
- * adequate resources for research
- * working conditions for faculty and staff
- * library staff and holdings
- * ratio of administrators to faculty, including acting administrators
- * curriculum diversity
- * access to state of the art electronic media
- * maintenance of facilities
- * state of the art equipment for career technical programs
- * quality control of distance education delivery

(NEA website) Ask the Expert

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) works to improve how America prepares its teachers by accrediting colleges and universities that meet national standards. Nearly 600 education programs -- which prepare two-thirds of the nation's teachers -- are accredited, including most state universities. As vice president for institutional relations, Boyce Williams works with universities and colleges pursuing NCATE accreditation. For more, visit www.ncate.org

Why is ncate now focusing on "performance-based" standards? What are they? Performance-based standards answer the questions asked by every parent with a child in a new teacher's classroom: How does the new teacher know what she is teaching? And how will my child learn what she is teaching?

It's not enough these days for new teachers to simply know academic subject material. They have to know how to teach it to children with different learning styles. They have to both know their material and show that they know what to do with it. We want to know whether new educators can actually cause children to learn. Multiple assessment measures -- such as videotaping lessons, evaluating portfolios and journals, and testing student knowledge -- all help candidates learn how to teach to a variety of learning styles.

Why is accreditation so important?

The answer comes down to one thing: accountability. Accreditation is the ultimate measure of quality in new teachers, like a professional seal of approval, because it assures the public across the board -- parents, business leaders, policy-makers -- that candidates coming out of a particular institution have been prepared to teach using rigorous national standards that have been designed by the profession.

There are some programs that aren't accredited that adequately prepare new teachers, but research has found that accredited programs produce the best teachers. Hospitals don't hire doctors unless they've graduated from accredited schools; someday the same might be said for teachers. By holding teacher preparation programs to high standards, we are assuring the public that they can be confident in new teachers.

Printer- friendly
E-mail

[contact us](#) | [site map](#) | [privacy statement](#) | jobs@NEA
1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036
© 2002-2004 NEA.org all rights reserved